(c) Steps taken to enhance export of these products include simplification of inspection procedures, removal of Minimum Export Price and quality restrictions on selected items, provisions of concessional credit, product development to meet international needs, extension of benefits available under the scheme of EOUs/EPZs to agriculture sector and permitting 50% sale in the domestic tariff area, assistance to exporters for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control, promoting export of identified products through brand promotion campaigns, arranging buyer-seller meets and participation in international fairs/exhibitions.

Proposal for Liberalisation of Tea Industry and Tea Export Policy

786. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for further liberalisation of the tea industry and tea export policy; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) A number of liberalisation measures have been taken by the Government in recent years. During the past two months the following steps have been taken to relax various controls on tea industry:—

(1) Provisions regarding issue of Shipment Licence have been reviewed by the Government and it has been declined that henceforth shipment licences will not be required by the exporters for each shipment. Necessary instructions have accordingly been issued by the Tea Board to the exporting community on 9th June, 1995.

(2) The provision of yearly renewal of exporter's licence for tea exports was replaced sometime ago by liberalised procedure whereby renewal of licence was ~nnired only after 3 years. This provision has been further liberalised and henceforth exporter's licence shall be issued by the Tea Board initially for 3 years to an exporter and if there is no default on the part of the exporter, it would be converted into a permanent licence. However, subsequently, if there is any default on the part of the exporter, he shall again be placed on a 3 year watch list or his licence may be revoked. Necessary amendments to Tea (Distribution & Export) Control Order in this regard were notified on 7th Jyly, 1995.

Liberalisation of various control orders is a continual process. Further liberalisation of various regulations governing the tea industry will be taken up as and when considered necessary.

Objectives of Eighth Five Year Plan

787. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) what are the major objectives of the Eighth Plan and to what extent those objectives have been achieved so far;

(b) whether the laid down objectives of the plan will be achieved;

(c) when was the last NDC meeting held and when the next meeting of the NDC is likely to take place; and

(d) the reasons for not holding the NDC meetings on time and regularly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI GIRIDHAR GAMANG): (a) and (b) The Eighth Five Year Plan accords priority to the following objectives;

(i) Generation of adequat employment to achieve near ful employment level by the turn c the century;

(ii) Containment of population growth through active people cooperation and an effecti